



SR0813

LRB096 22156 GRL 40830 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Victor Hicken of Iowa City, Iowa, who passed away on April 8, 2010; and

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WHEREAS, Victor Hicken was born on September 28, 1921, in Witt; he was the son of Thomas Hicken and Ann Atherton Hicken; he met Mary O'Connell while attending the United States Naval Officers Candidate School at Columbia University in New York City; the couple was married on December 28, 1943; and

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WHEREAS, Victor Hicken attended public schools in Gillespie and earned his Bachelor of Education degree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale; after his stint in the military, he attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he earned his Master of Arts degree and Ph.D. in American History; and

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WHEREAS, During World War II, Victor Hicken was the officer in charge of one of the very first landing craft to hit the beach at Dog Green, the naval landing site located at the heavily fortified Vierville, France sector of Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944; his LCT(A) craft was specially designed to carry explosive elements to destroy beach obstacles before the arrival of the first United States and British infantry units;

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1 the Allied landing at this spot was portrayed in the movie
2 "Saving Private Ryan"; he was later assigned to the Pacific
3 theatre, where his ship endured two typhoons and he witnessed
4 the last kamikaze attack at Okinawa; his experiences in World
5 War II were chronicled in the book "Omaha Beach: D-Day, June 6,
6 1944" by Joseph Balkoski; and

7 WHEREAS, In his 34-year tenure as professor of history at
8 Western Illinois University in Macomb, Victor Hicken served on
9 every major academic and administrative committee; during his
10 several terms on the Salary Committee, WIU increased faculty
11 salaries to match those of peer institutions; during his terms
12 on the Faculty Senate, faculty powers were enhanced; he was
13 also instrumental in establishing the university archives and
14 went on to document the history of the school in "The Purple
15 and the Gold: The Story of Western Illinois University"; he
16 served as chair of the History Department from 1967 to 1969 and
17 was voted Illinois Author of the Year by the Illinois
18 Association of Teachers of English in 1976; during his last 5
19 years at WIU, he held the position of Distinguished University
20 Professor, the first and only WIU professor to be awarded this
21 honor by a faculty committee; he also taught courses at Knox
22 College in Galesburg and Black Hawk College in Moline; and

23 WHEREAS, Victor Hicken served on several State committees,
24 including those which helped to define the role of junior

1 colleges in the state and developed and promoted the teaching
2 of African-American history; he served on the State Historic
3 Sites Committee and, in 1976, was elected the president of the
4 Illinois State Historical Society; he was appointed guest
5 lecturer at the University of Salzburg in Austria; he also
6 conducted research for the National Education Association and
7 for the American Academy for the Advancement of Science; and

8 WHEREAS, Victor Hicken is often listed among the most noted
9 academic authors in the State of Illinois; his first major
10 work, "Illinois in the Civil War", is considered a classic in
11 the field, presenting one of the first and best descriptions of
12 the Civil War in the West; "Illinois in the Civil War" was the
13 winner of the Award of Merit by the American Association for
14 State and Local History and has been in print for over 40
15 years; he was among the first to write about the critical role
16 of the African-American soldier in the Civil War; he also wrote
17 contributing pieces to the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine and
18 numerous articles in scholarly journals on such subjects as
19 African-American history, political trends, and organized
20 labor issues; and

21 WHEREAS, Victor Hicken enjoyed art, painting, poetry, and
22 music; he was a lifelong St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan and
23 enjoyed playing baseball in the university faculty and staff
24 leagues; he was an avid runner and kept a regular routine of

1 running 10 miles a day; he and his wife were members of St.
2 George's Episcopal Church in Macomb congregation for over 50
3 years; after his retirement, he and his wife spent most of
4 their time at their cabin in northern Minnesota, where he
5 enjoyed fishing and birding; and

6 WHEREAS, Victor Hicken is survived by his wife of 66 years,
7 Mary; his son, Jeffrey Price Hicken and his daughter-in-law,
8 Mary Sarah Hicken; his granddaughter, Elizabeth Ann Hicken, his
9 son-in-law, Daniel Bellrichard, and his great-granddaughter,
10 Lulu Jeanette Bellrichard; his granddaughter, Molly Catherine
11 Hicken; his grandson, Andrew Victor Hicken and his
12 daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Anne Mackey; his son, Brian Thomas
13 O'Connell, his daughter-in-law, Lesley O'Connell, and his
14 grandchildren, Evan O'Connell and Rachel O'Connell; his
15 daughter, Elizabeth Ann Christiansen, and his son-in-law, Dana
16 Eric Christiansen; and his son, Daniel Joseph Hicken, and his
17 daughter-in-law, Kimberly Kay Hicken; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
20 his family and friends, the passing of Victor Hicken; and be it
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to the family of Victor Hicken as an expression of

SR0813

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1 our sympathy.